

July 16, 2013
Joyce Okonuk, First Selectman
Board of Selectman
579 Exeter Road
Lebanon, Connecticut 06249

TO: Joyce Okonuk and Board

The Town Charter Study Commission met on Thursday, July 11 and voted unanimously to recommend that the Board of Selectman create a Charter Committee to write a town charter for the Town of Lebanon.

There are a number of advantages in having a town charter and we have listed several in the accompanying report. The greatest advantage is that a Town Charter gives the Town of Lebanon greater flexibility in making changes in a timely manner.

We believe that it is important to note that 111 of the 169 towns, some bigger, some smaller than Lebanon, operate under a Town Charter. Another important recommendation is that the Town's Plan of Development also calls for the establishment of a town charter as well.

We believe that our work is done and ask the Board of Selectman to accept our report and dissolve the Town Charter Study Commission.

If the Board of Selectman wishes, I am willing to meet with you to discuss our findings.

Sincerely,



Ryk Nelson
Chairperson

Town Charter Study Committee
Final Report to Board of Selectmen
July 11, 2013

Generally, the advantages associated with having a charter are that it provides a different mode of selecting officials, better accountability, or a clearer delineation of functions for town officials. Specific advantages are listed below:

1. Having a charter gives the Town greater flexibility to organize its form of government without seeking general assembly approval.
2. The Town can also adopt minor variations from statutory requirements for organization and procedure.
3. Officials, such as the treasurer, tax collector, and town clerk can be appointed rather than elected.
4. The charter can prescribe a precise budget timetable.
5. Towns that are experiencing growth frequently need flexibility to adapt to changing conditions in town.
6. Under a charter, the people of the town get to decide how big or small the government needs to be to serve the needs of the town.

Supporting facts:

1. 111 of the 169 towns in Connecticut have adopted town charters.
2. Towns that are larger and smaller than Lebanon have charters.
3. A charter does not remove the town meeting form of government.

As per the Town of Lebanon's 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development, Lebanon operates without a town charter or a professional administrator. As the town is required to deal with an increasing array of local, state and federal mandates, consideration should be made to establish a town charter and to enact an alternate form of government; e.g. town administrator or manager.

Conclusion: This Charter Study Committee recommends pursuit of a town charter.

The recommendation of this Charter Study Committee to the Board of Selectman is to form a formal charter study committee.